

validating the worst instincts of the anti-police agitators.

The president of the Minneapolis City Council called on her colleagues to “imagine a future without police.” And sure enough, in Los Angeles, police were told to make do after a cut of \$150 million. In Seattle, the police department budget shrank by nearly 20 percent. Defunding efforts here in Washington were passed by committee unanimously.

The Biden administration has amplified these efforts by appointing avowed supporters of defunding the police, like Vanita Gupta and Kristen Clarke, to high-ranking positions at the Justice Department, the Agency charged with enforcing Federal criminal law.

Now, we didn't have to imagine the consequences of betraying the brave officers charged with keeping the peace. Millions of Americans have been living this dangerous new reality literally for months. Last year closed with the Nation's sharpest 1-year increase in homicides in decades. In New York City, the murder rate jumped nearly 45 percent, and in my hometown of Louisville, it is already on pace this year to exceed last year's all-time record.

New fears arose in communities across the country, and as Democrats flirted with their imagined future without police, Americans did exactly what you would expect of a free people: They looked to their own defense and exercised their Second Amendment rights in record numbers. The FBI processed nearly 40 million background checks on gun purchasers last year, shattering previous records. And, nationwide, 40 percent of the guns sold last year were purchased by—listen to this—first-time buyers. In particular, members of racial minority groups joined the ranks of gun owners in record numbers.

So let's review. In city after city, powerful Democrats vocally refused to uphold their responsibilities to protect public safety. Violent crime filled the void. Against this backdrop, the American people chose to defend themselves by exercising a core constitutional right.

But now, as Democrats at the State and local level play politics with public safety, Democrats here in Washington want to make gun ownership in America more burdensome than ever. Prominent voices on the left, including some of our colleagues, fanned the flames of a dangerously misguided experiment, and law-abiding Americans are paying the price.

Here in the Senate, Republicans have been focused all along on making American communities actually safer. It is why we supported TIM SCOTT's efforts to pass police reform that empowered law enforcement to do their jobs very well rather than federalizing and defunding the police.

It is the reason that Chairman LINDSEY GRAHAM and 46 other Republican Senators joined me today to demand publicly that the Department of Justice cease its efforts to restrict the

use of common pistol-brace devices by lawful gun owners. We are talking about a plan that would turn millions of law-abiding Americans into criminals with a stroke of the pen. It would be an outrageous violation, and we expect DOJ to withdraw this attempted confiscation. Federal law enforcement should focus on the criminals committing violent crimes in American cities, not on law-abiding gun owners.

So Republicans will continue to stand for Americans' Second Amendment rights, as a matter of public safety and of basic freedoms.

#### DEMOCRATIC AGENDA

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, on another matter, as the Senate headed into the June work period, the Democratic leader laid out an agenda that was transparently designed to fail, a string of far-left proposals that were not intended to become law or to make a difference in the lives of the American people. They were designed to fail and provide political theater for liberal activists.

And sure enough, the Senate did reject Democrats' brazen attempt to rewrite the rules of American elections, permanently, to their own advantage. We did reject their bid to exploit the cause of paycheck fairness to fill the pockets of the trial bar. And other radical proposals, like the one to impose crushing legal penalties on organizations that failed to conform to leftwing social preferences, didn't make it to the floor.

But, let's remember, this was never just about policy. If our colleagues actually believed that the substance of their plans were viable, they would have submitted more to scrutiny in committee. We know how things work in this body when a narrow majority actually wants to make a law. That is not what we have actually seen.

So Senate Democrats weren't out to pass any legislation this month. Their designed-to-fail agenda was supposed to indicate that the institution of the Senate itself was somehow broken. And on this count, our friends across the aisle failed spectacularly.

See, the Framers designed the upper Chamber, our Chamber, to be a proving ground, a place where good ideas would rise to meet high standards and bad ones would actually fall flat. So this month our Senate colleagues proved that the Senate is working quite well.

We turned away an underhanded attempt to open American employers to a new form of unlimited predatory liability and a hostile takeover of our election system. And the whole time, productive work continued on bipartisan proposals that are actually—actually—intended to become law. From infrastructure to agriculture, many of our colleagues have been hard at work demonstrating the right way to go about legislating. In the Commerce and EPW Committees, they approved smart legislation with wide bipartisan votes.

This morning on the floor, we considered another bill from Senator BRAUN that more than half of our colleagues actually cosponsored.

So as we head back to our home States and take time to celebrate our Nation's founding, let's double down on efforts like these and leave designed-to-fail partisan antics in June.

#### INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, now on one final matter, earlier today, a bipartisan group of infrastructure negotiators took the results of their efforts down to President Biden. It was an encouraging sign of progress after leading Democrats had gone out of their way to slow the process.

Remember, at the first sign of an agreement last night and then again this morning, both the Democratic leader and the Speaker of the House made it clear they would hold a bipartisan agreement hostage, demanding trillions of dollars in wasteful spending and job-killing tax increases in return for even considering it. The top two Democrats literally pulled the rug out from under their bipartisan negotiators with these unserious demands before they had even made it down to the White House.

So President Biden's show of support earlier today appeared to be a major breakthrough for earning Democrats' support, but, alas, that optimism was short-lived. Less than 2 hours after publicly commending our colleagues and actually endorsing the bipartisan agreement, the President took the extraordinary step of threatening to veto it. It was a tale of two press conferences—endorse the agreement in one breath and threaten to veto it in the next. Less than 2 hours. It almost makes your head spin. Less than 2 hours. As I said, it almost makes your head spin—an expression of bipartisanship and then an ultimatum on behalf of your leftwing base.

I have no doubt the President is under enormous pressure from some on the left to deliver on a laundry list of radical climate demands. The Democratic leader and the Speaker have already made clear they will do whatever it takes to keep their runaway spending train chugging along all summer, and more and more Members of their party are having to contort their positions to keep pace with the expectations of the Green New Deal fringe. But, really, caving completely in less than 2 hours? That is not the way to show you are serious about getting a bipartisan outcome.

So, look, I hope our colleagues can recover and get their good-faith efforts back on track.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic whip is recognized.

#### GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, this week marked the official start of summer, and by all means, it should be a